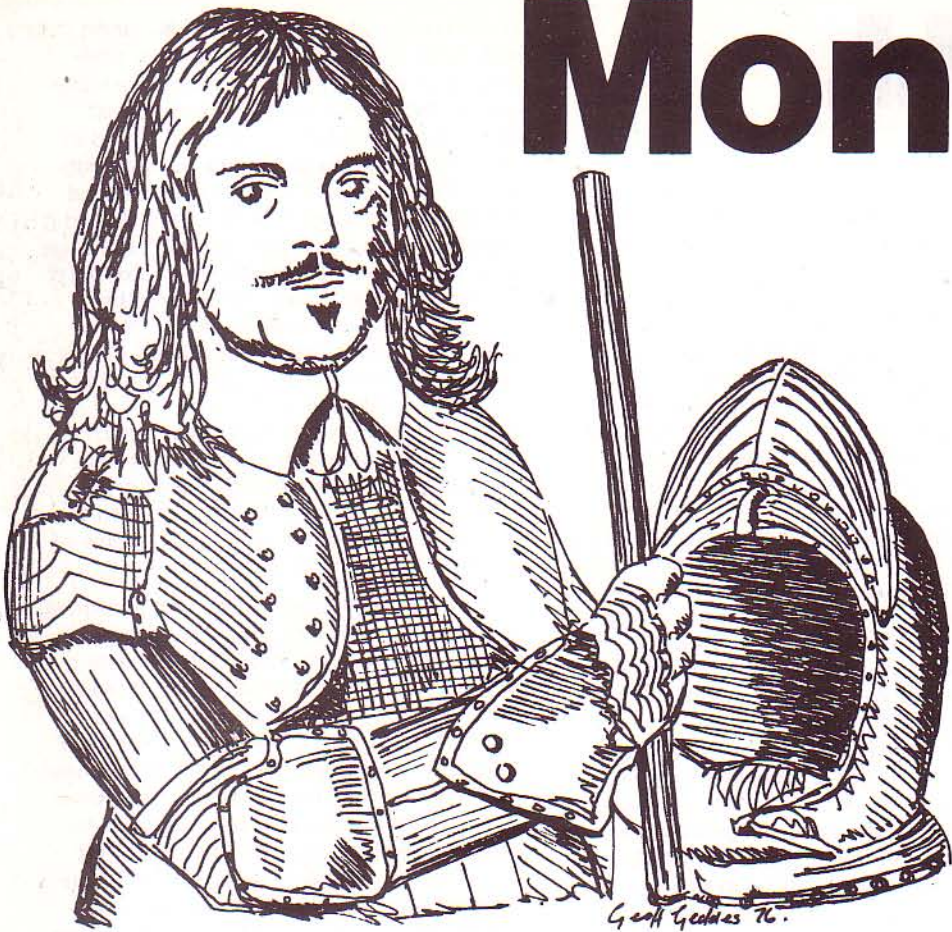


Montrose



The Scottish Campaign of James Graham the Marquess of Montrose by Geoff Geddes

This is the first part of a major article aimed at simulating the entire campaign using SPI's "Musket and Pike".

Part I recalls the historical campaign and later issues of Phoenix will carry the various scenarios covering each of the battles.

The Historical Background.

During the First Civil War (1642 -1646) Scotland was lost to King Charles 1 by the signing of the Solemn League and Covenant in September 1643. The signing of this document brought Scotland into the English Civil War on the side of Parliament. But not all Scots were Covenanters, and in an attempt to raise the western highland clans, King Charles sent James Graham the Marquis Montrose to Scotland in 1644.

After an abortive start, caused in the main by the Royalists disaster at Marston Moor, Montrose set out with just two companions to conquer Scotland for the King. The Earl of Antrim had been ordered by the King to raise his Northern Irish MacDonalds and land them on the western coast of Scotland. On arrival in the highlands Montrose found the Irish troops about to fight their supposed Scottish allies. With great diplomacy Montrose settled the arguments and raised the King's banner over his new army of 2000 Scots and Irish clansmen.

Montrose now set out on a brilliant campaign in which he was frequently outnumbered but never outfought. Reliant on clansmen who were fierce fighters but who often left for home with the plunder from successful battles, Montrose's forces fluctuated in size from 4000 to only 1500. The nucleus of Montrose's army were the Irish troops under Alasdair Macdonald. These soldiers were experienced professionals who could be relied on at all times. The Covenanters were presented with

many problems in their attempts to deal with Montrose. The main Scottish army was away in England fighting alongside the armies of Parliament. Most of the more experienced soldiers were with this army. Manpower was not a problem: the Covenanters could raise and arm many men, but they were inexperienced levies and in the main badly led. In the end it became necessary to call a substantial part of the army in England back to Scotland to deal with Montrose. Incompetence was not the only reason for Covenanter commanders' failure, for these men suffered from the attentions of a committee of ministers and 'interested parties' which accompanied the army wherever it went. These zealous gentlemen could, and frequently did, override military decisions for reasons of their own. On many occasions the interference of the committee led to disaster on the battlefield, Kilsyth being a case in point.

The Campaign.

Montrose set out towards Perth recruiting local men as he went. A covenanting army under Lord Elcho blocked his approach to the city and brought about the battle of *Tippermuir* on 1st of September 1644. Lord Elcho's 7000 levies were no match for the experienced soldiers of Montrose, and were soon routed. Montrose then found himself without his undisciplined Scots who went home with the spoils of the battle. Despite this he moved on and took the town of Dundee. From there Montrose moved to *Aberdeen* where a second battle was fought, on the second of

September 1644. The opponent this time was Lord Balfour of Burleigh. As the Covenanters advanced they were taken in flank by Montrose and routed completely.

During this time Montrose's small army was being pursued by yet another Covenanter army under the command of the Duke of Argyle. Montrose's Scottish Macdonalds were the hereditary enemies of the Duke of Argyle's Campbells and the campaign took on an aspect of Clan warfare.

Montrose could not stop the Macdonalds from attacking Clan Campbell, so, despite the desperate lack of supplies and powder his army was suffering, he invaded Campbell country. The small army reached Inveraray, the principle Campbell fortress on Loch Fyne, and surprised the Campbell forces in the area. Montrose's army laid waste to the area and looted the surrounding countryside. The Covenanter leaders now decided to withdraw part of Lord Leven's army from England. William Baillie was sent north with a detachment, and working with the Duke of Argyle, attempted to trap Montrose as he withdrew from Campbell country. But Montrose doubled back and on the second of February 1645 after an incredible forced march over the Lochaber hills descended on the Campbells at *Inverlochy*. The Duke of Argyle's army was cut to pieces. 1500 men of his initial force of 3000 were killed. Montrose lost only a handful of men due to the complete surprise of his attack.

The Covenanter commander in the north was Colonel Hurry, who had fought for the Royalists at Marston Moor, and then changed sides. He decided that the best chance of defeating Montrose lay in luring him away from his areas of support, and then ambushing him. Hurry fell back before advancing Montrose and then turned on him near the village of *Auldearn*. On the 9th of May 1645 after a night march, the Covenanters ran into the trap that Montrose had hastily set for them. A flank attack by the main Royalist force, which had been concealed behind the brow of a hill, routed the Covenanters. Hurry's army fought well and it was not an easy victory, but it was a complete one, and the Covenanters were totally destroyed.

There were still Covenanter armies in the field despite this victory, and Montrose needed time to recruit and reorganise. Now it was Montrose's turn to lure his enemies into unfavorable country, and the new Covenanter commander in Scotland, William Baillie followed Montrose to *Alford*. When Baillie saw the strength of the Royalist army's position he did not want to give battle. The Committee of the Estates, following the Covenanter Army, overruled Baillie and ordered him to proceed. The battle of Alford on July the second 1645 was a disaster for the Covenanters.

Caught between the river Don and the high

ground at Alford, they suffered heavy losses. Royalist losses were again slight, but among them was Lord Gordon killed by a stray bullet.

Across the border in England, things were not going so well for the Royalist cause. Royalist jokes about the 'New Noddle Army' had turned sour, after the battle of Naseby. The New Model Army under Fairfax and Cromwell had out-thought and out-fought the King's army. Montrose realised that he must march into England and assist the King. Montrose began to march south crossing the Forth above Stirling. General Baillie was raising a new army at Perth and was determined to cut Montrose off before he reached England. On the 15th of August 1645, Baillie caught up with Montrose outside the town of *Kilsyth*. At this battle Baillie was again dogged by the interference of the Committee of Estates. Thinking that at last they had Montrose trapped, the Committee ordered Baillie to march part of his force round the flank of the Royalist army. The result was a disaster, the divided Covenanter army was attacked and annihilated. Little mercy was shown to the fleeing remnants of the army and many were slaughtered.

Montrose was now the last Royalist hope, and the King, hearing of his successes, considered joining Montrose in Scotland with what remained of his army. As a reward for

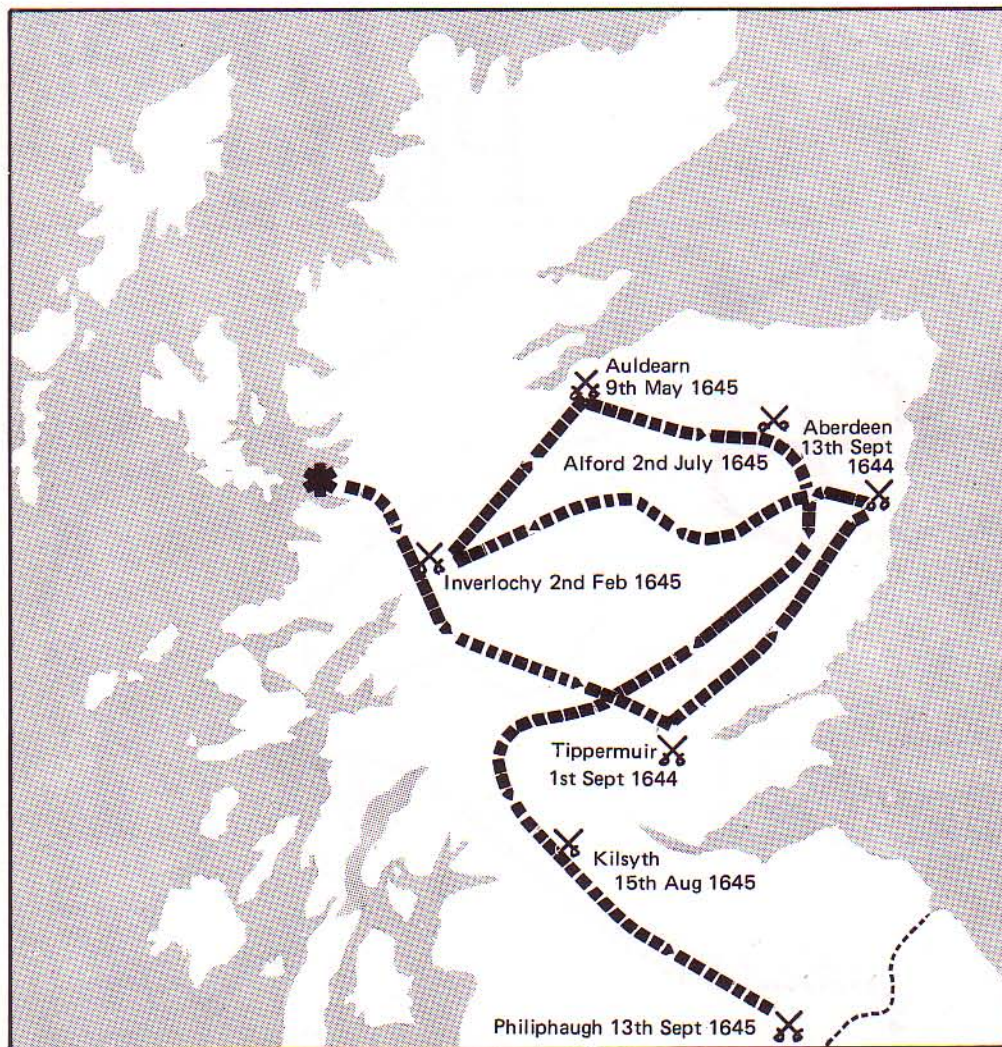
his services, Montrose was appointed Captain General and Lieutenant Governor of Scotland. There was now no army left in Scotland to oppose Montrose and complete victory seemed to be his, but all was not well. The highland clansmen began to return to their homes with the plunder they had obtained. The Macleans, worried that their enemies the Campbells would raid their lands while they were away, went home. Montrose's army was melting away. Internal disension, and intrigue weakened Montrose's position still more. But Montrose continued to campaign, moving south and hopeful that he could pick up new recruits in the border country.

The Scottish army in England was besieging Hereford when news came of the disaster at Kilsyth. Lord Leven decided at once to send General Sir David Leslie north with 4000 cavalry and dragoons. Leslie moved north with great speed, picking up reinforcements on the way. As he crossed the border, Leslie obtained news of the weak state of Montrose's forces. General David Leslie was a different kind of commander to those Montrose had fought and beaten. He was an able and professional soldier, and acted in a decisive manner. Changing direction he set off in the direction of Montrose's camp.

On the 13th September 1645 he approached the Royalist camp at *Philiphaugh*.

Attacking in two wings, he obtained complete surprise. Montrose, believing Leslie to be miles away, had spent the night in the nearby town of Selkirk, and by the time he arrived the battle had begun. It was soon over and Montrose was urged to flee by his lieutenants.

Reluctantly he left, and with a few horsemen escaped. After Montrose left, what remained of his army surrendered. The prisoners were all slaughtered in cold blood by the Covenanter army, acting on the orders of the committee. The King's cause was now lost in Scotland as well as England and the First Civil War soon ended. Montrose attempted to raise another army, but winter was beginning to set in and little could be done. In the spring of 1646 things began to go Montrose's way again, but after a minor success at Callander, Montrose received a letter from King Charles ordering him to lay down his arms and leave the country. Montrose went into exile and his Scottish campaign was over.



Bibliography:

Various studies of Montrose have been written, perhaps the most easily available is C.V. Wedgwood's 'Montrose', Collins 1952. For the military side of things, the following books are helpful and easily found. William Seymour. 'Battles in Britain: Vol. 2 1642-1746'. Published by Sidgwick and Jackson (Good on Auldearn, Alford and Kilsyth) Philip Warner. 'Famous Scottish Battles'. Published by Eyre Methuen 1974. (A military history of all three Civil Wars) John Tucker and Lewis S Winstock. (Editors). 'The English Civil War, a military handbook'. Published by Arms & Armour Press, 1972. (Good for background information).